

VZCZCXRO9322  
PP RUEHCHI RUEHDT RUEHHM  
DE RUEHML #2013/01 1300847  
ZNY CCCCC ZZH  
P 100847Z MAY 06  
FM AMEMBASSY MANILA  
TO RUEHC/SECSTATE WASHDC PRIORITY 0941  
INFO RUEHZS/ASSOCIATION OF SOUTHEAST ASIAN NATIONS PRIORITY  
RUEKJCS/SECDEF WASHDC PRIORITY  
RHEHNSC/NSC WASHDC PRIORITY  
RUEABND/DEA WASHDC PRIORITY  
RUEAIIA/CIA WASHDC PRIORITY  
RHHMUNA/CDRUSPACOM HONOLULU HI PRIORITY

C O N F I D E N T I A L SECTION 01 OF 04 MANILA 002013

SIPDIS

SIPDIS

STATE FOR EAP, EAP/MTS, EAP/MLS, INR/EAP, INR/TNC, S/CT  
NSC FOR MORROW

E.O. 12958: DECL: 05/11/2016

TAGS: [PGOV](#) [PTER](#) [PREL](#) [MOPS](#) [PINS](#) [KISL](#) [MY](#) [RP](#)

SUBJECT: GRP-MILF PEACE TALKS DEADLOCKED OVER TERRITORIAL  
CLAIMS

REF: A. MANILA 1887

[B](#). MANILA 1747

[C](#). MANILA 1395

Classified By: Acting Pol/C Joseph L. Novak for reasons 1.4 (b) and (d)

[1](#). (C) Summary. GRP and Moro Islamic Liberation Front (MILF) negotiators failed to reach an agreement on ancestral domain during their 12th Round of Exploratory Talks, but were successful in expanding the composition/mandate of the International Monitoring Team, and extending the Ad Hoc Joint Action Group until June 2007. Additional exploratory talks and on-the-ground surveys are being planned by the GRP-MILF Peace Panels to break their deadlock over territorial claims.  
End Summary.

-----  
Control of Territory Remains Stumbling Block  
-----

[2](#). (SBU) The GRP and MILF Peace Panels held their 12th Round of Exploratory Talks in Kuala Lumpur, Malaysia on May 2-4. Secretary Silvestre C. Afable chaired the GRP delegation,

SIPDIS

which included retired Armed Forces of the Philippines (AFP) Vice-Chief of Staff Rodolfo Garcia, Sultan Kudurat Provincial Governor Pax Mangudadatu, Western Mindanao University professor Rudy Rodil, and Indigenous Peoples representative and chairman of the Mindanao Coalition of Development NGOs Sylvia Paraguya. The MILF delegation was composed of Peace Panel Chairman Mohager Iqbal, Technical Working Group Head Musib Buat, Maulana Robert Alonto, and legal advisors Michael Mastura and Lanang Ali.

[3](#). (C) Executive Director of the GRP Peace Negotiations Panel Secretariat Ryan Sullivan told poloff on May 8 that the MILF claimed ancestral domain (i.e. hereditary land rights) over eighty-four municipalities outside of the Autonomous Region of Muslim Mindanao (ARMM) that have communities of Muslims and/or Lumads (indigenous peoples). An MILF proposal to have a Bangsamoro Juridical Entity control two-thirds of Mindanao -- the five-province ARMM (Basilan, Sulu, Tawi-Tawi, Maguindanao, and Lanao Del Sur Provinces), one-half of the Zamboanga Peninsula, most of North Cotabato, South Cotabato, Sultan Kudurat and Lanao Del Norte Provinces, and parts of Palawan, Sarangani, Bukidnon, Davao Del Norte, and Davao Oriental Provinces -- was unacceptable to the GRP Peace Panel. Consequently, the 12th Exploratory Talks in Kuala

Lumpur concluded on May 4 without an ancestral domain agreement between the two parties, according to Sullivan.

-----  
Joint Validation Survey Needed  
-----

¶4. (C) Sullivan commented that the MILF's inclusion of at least 18 tribes of Lumads in its ancestral domain claim significantly expanded the territory to be placed under a Bangsamoro Juridical Entity. An on-the-ground joint validation survey will be necessary to determine the number of Lumads in Mindanao that actually support being part of a Bangsamoro Homeland.

-----  
The Devil Is In the Details  
-----

¶5. (C) Details regarding revenue sharing from natural resources (petroleum, natural gas, and minerals) will be discussed during formal talks after the signing of an ancestral domain agreement. The consensus points reached thus far on this key issue have been conceptual, according to Sullivan.

¶6. (C) Sullivan said the MILF wanted mining companies in a "Bangsamoro Homeland" to be socially and environmentally responsible. Existing mining contracts would be honored until expiration, at which time new contracts would have to be negotiated with the Bangsamoro Juridical Entity.

-----  
Expansion of International Monitoring Team  
-----

MANILA 00002013 002 OF 004

¶7. (C) GRP and MILF negotiators agreed to request a one-year extension for the Malaysia-led International Monitoring Team (IMT) and to expand the membership of this effective peacekeeping force. Since the deployment of the IMT in October 2004, ceasefire violations significantly decreased from 500 during 2002-2004 to only 37 in calendar year 2005, according to GRP data.

¶8. (C) The GRP-MILF Peace Panels requested Malaysia, Brunei, and Libya to extend the IMT's mandate and expand its membership to include other nations. Sullivan noted that discussions were already underway between the GRP, MILF, and Japanese Government regarding the latter's potential monitoring of the socio-economic and development aspects of the peace process. (Note: Based on local press reporting, the Director of the Second Southeast Asia Division of Japan's Foreign Ministry, Shigeo Yamada, and the First Secretary of the Political Section of the Japanese Embassy in Manila, Yoshihisa Yamada, met with MILF leaders in Sultan Kudurat, Maguindanao Province on May 7 to discuss Japan's role in the GRP-MILF peace process. End Note.)

-----  
Extension of Ad Hoc Joint Action Group  
-----

¶9. (C) The GRP-MILF Peace Panels also agreed to extend the mandate of the Ad Hoc Joint Action Group (AHJAG) until June ¶2007. AHJAG Chairman/Armed Forces of the Philippines Brigadier-General Ben D. Dolorfino told poloff on April 18 that the GRP-MILF AHJAG was composed of five teams. Each team has at least four members -- two GRP and two MILF -- who report to an AHJAG Core Leadership Group.

--- Team 1 covers Maguindanao, North Cotabato, and Bukidnon Provinces. The MILF members are Professor Tahir S. Kanakan and George Kasim.

--- Team 2 covers Lanao Del Sur, Lanao Del Norte, Misamis Oriental, and Misamis Occidental Provinces. The MILF members are Engineer Aliodin S. Sangcopan and Ameruding P. Usman.

--- Team 3 covers the Zamboanga Del Sur, Zamboanga Del Norte, and Zamboanga Sibugay Provinces. The MILF members are Amsid Sanson and Bonnie Salih.

--- Team 4 covers Socsargen (South Cotabato-Sultan Kudurat-Sarangani-General Santos). The MILF members are Hadji Salem M. Abu and Ustadz Ansar A. Kudanding.

--- Team 5 covers Davao Del Norte, Davao Del Sur, Davao Oriental, and Compostela Valley Provinces. The MILF members are Jebreil Arafat and Abidin S. Arip.

--- The MILF representatives on the AHJAG Core Leadership Group are Attorney Abdul M. Dataya, Dr. Saffrullah M. Dipatuan, Mohammad Nasif, and Bashir L. Takasan.

¶9. (C) According to Dolorfino, during calendar year 2005, the GRP-MILF AHJAG conducted 21 operations that resulted in the killing of 8 members of the Abu Sayyaf Group and Jemaah Islamiya; arrest of 6 criminals operating in MILF communities; rescue of 14 kidnap victims; recovery of 2 stolen vehicles, 12 high-powered firearms, and one .45 pistol; the burning of 2,500 fully grown marijuana plants with an estimated street value of 2.5 million pesos (\$46,476 US); and the prevention of misunderstandings/armed encounters between GRP and MILF forces.

¶10. (C) Dolorfino commented that the AHJAG is setting its sights on the methamphetamine trade that now threatens the moral fiber of Muslim society in Mindanao. According to Dolorfino, "narco-politics" has been on the rise. At least seven "drug lords" are currently serving as mayors in Lanao Del Sur Province alone. The AHJAG's Core Leadership Group is planning to begin operations against traffickers in Marawi City -- a location described by Dolorfino as one of the centers of the drug business. (Further details on the drug situation in Muslim Mindanao will follow in a separate message.)

-----

MANILA 00002013 003 OF 004

Comment

-----

¶11. (C) GRP and MILF negotiators have their work cut out to break the deadlock over the issue of ancestral domain. The extension/expansion of the IMT and AHJAG -- which have been instrumental in sustaining the ceasefire in Mindanao -- bodes well for the peace process. The cooperative relationships developed between the AFP/PNP and MILF since the AHJAG was first activated in January 2005 will be critical for AHJAG operations against powerful Muslim drug trafficking syndicates.

-----  
Text of Joint Statement  
-----

¶12. (SBU) The text of the Joint Statement from the 12th Round of GRP-MILF Exploratory Talks on May 2-4 follows.

Begin text:

The Peace Panels of the Government of the Republic of the Philippines (GRP) and the Moro Islamic Liberation Front (MILF) wrapped up the 3-day 12th Round of GRP-MILF Exploratory Talks in Kuala Lumpur today by declaring substantive gains in the Ancestral Domain agenda while acknowledging that more work had to be done on the strand of territory, particularly in the determination and delimitation of areas to be placed under a prospective Bangsamoro

Juridical Entity (BJE).

The Panels achieved significant progress in defining the concept, sharing the resources and establishing governance in the BJE but were held back from reaching full consensus by the highly technical nature of discussions on the delineation and demarcation of territory. For this purpose, they agreed to conduct further ground validation and collection of additional data to guide them in the resolution of remaining items.

The talks were held under an atmosphere of frankness, cordiality, goodwill marking the commitment of both sides to uphold and advance the gains already achieved in the ancestral domain agenda.

The Panels decided to extend the mandate of the AHJAG Interim Guidelines for a period of one (1) year once its mandate ends on June 21, 2006.

The Panels committed to move forward the establishment of the Bangsamoro Leadership and Management Institute (BLMI), which is envisioned as an agent of change in the social and political environment of the Bangsamoro people. Both Panels decided to continue availing of the training programs organized by the Malaysian Government under the Malaysian Technical Cooperation Program (MTCP). In this regard, they will also seek the assistance of the Development Academy of the Philippines (DAP) to compliment the current Malaysian capacity-building efforts.

The Panels reached a consensus to immediately activate a joint advocacy team in order to formulate and undertake a program of public information aimed at raising broad awareness of, and support for, the peace process.

The Panels welcomed the entry of the United Nations World Food Program and other organizations in Mindanao in support of the peace process prior to the signing of the comprehensive agreement. The Panels agreed that such a mission should be done in coordination with the Bangsamoro Development Agency (BDA).

The Panels expressed their gratitude to Malaysian Prime Minister Dato Seri Abdullah Bin Haji Ahmad Badawi and to President Gloria Macapagal-Arroyo, for their unstinting support for the Mindanao peace process.

End Text.

Visit Embassy Manila's Classified SIPRNET website:  
<http://www.state.sgov.gov/p/eap/manila/index.cfm>

MANILA 00002013 004 OF 004

You can also access this site through the State Department's Classified SIPRNET website:  
<http://www.state.sgov.gov/>

Kenney